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U.S.-Middle East Partnership for Breast Cancer Awareness and Research Develops Workshop for Nurses Treating Breast Cancer Patients

Partners with Oncology Nursing Society (USA) to develop curriculum tailored to the Middle East and North Africa

Bethlehem, West Bank – Today the U.S.-Middle East Partnership for Breast Cancer Awareness and Research, in partnership with the Oncology Nursing Society (ONS), launched a new pilot training workshop for nurses who treat women with breast cancer in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). The Partnership created the curriculum in direct response to requests from nurses in the MENA region who said that further training was needed to better understand breast cancer and the special considerations for caring for women with the disease.

“Women and families in the Middle East, where breast cancer mortality is higher than in western countries, will be the ultimate beneficiaries,” says Olivia Ricchi, Program Manager at the Office of the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), at the U.S. Department of State. “This innovative training program will empower nurses at the community level to upgrade their skills and teach others about caring for patients with breast cancer.”

Led by ONS Trainers, the pilot program training curriculum was developed with support from nurses in the region to build knowledge in how to treat breast cancer patients. In each location, ONS Trainers have been working with resident nurses and local experts to localize the training, ensuring that it is relevant to the country’s nursing community. The curriculum has been translated into both Arabic and French.

In addition to designing the core, regional curriculum, ONS donated its comprehensive text on breast cancer care, *Site Specific Cancer Series: Breast Cancer*, for use and adaptation by the U.S.-Middle East Partnership. The text has been translated into Arabic and will be made available on the Partnership’s website for workshop participants and other nurses in the region to have as a resource (www.bcpartnership.org).

“Once a diagnosis has been given, nurses play an essential role in caring for people with breast cancer,” says Paula Rieger, RN, MSN, AOCN®, FAAN, Chief Executive Officer for ONS. “We are excited for the opportunity to both teach and learn from our colleagues in the West Bank as they strive to enhance the care they provide to their patients.”

The Partnership is holding initial pilot workshops in the Palestinian Territories (November 2-4) hosted by Bethlehem University, and in Jordan (November 7-9) hosted by King Hussein

Cancer Center and the Jordan Breast Cancer Program. The Partnership will make the core curriculum publicly available on its website after feedback from the pilot workshops has been incorporated.

The U.S.-Middle East Partnership for Breast Cancer Awareness and Research was created in direct response to calls from women in the Middle East who are leading the fight against breast cancer. Through the Partnership, launched in June, 2006, participants have increased clinical research collaboration efforts, public awareness about the importance of early detection, implementation of outreach strategies, and distribution of treatment information. In addition to ONS, key U.S.-based partners include Susan G. Komen for the Cure® and The University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center. Learn more at www.bcpartnership.org. This project is funded through the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, Office of the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI). MEPI supports efforts to expand political participation, strengthen civil society and the rule of law, empower women and youth, create educational opportunities, and foster economic reform throughout the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). In support of these goals, MEPI works with non-governmental organizations, the private sector, and academic institutions, as well as governments. More information about MEPI can be found at: www.mepi.state.gov.

The Oncology Nursing Society (ONS), based in Pittsburgh, PA, is a professional organization of more than 37,000 registered nurses and other healthcare professionals. ONS is committed to excellence in oncology nursing and to leading the transformation of cancer care by initiating and actively supporting educational, legislative, and public-awareness efforts to improve the care of people with cancer. ONS provides nurses and healthcare professionals with access to the highest quality educational programs, cancer-care resources, research opportunities, and networks for peer support. Learn more at www.ons.org.

ICF International facilitates the U.S.-Middle East Partnership for Breast Cancer Awareness and Research through a cooperative agreement with MEPI. Through this agreement ICF International develops and implements cutting-edge models for U.S.- MENA public-private partnerships intended to engage women throughout the MENA region. As the Partnership provision of health education and awareness information to women of this region grows, ICF continues to unite breast cancer advocates, doctors, nurses, researchers, and survivors, and increase breast cancer awareness and research opportunities

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